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## SGF'S YOUNGEST EVER PRESIDENT APPOINTED

In a further sign of a significantly changing industry, Nisa retailer Dan Brown has been inaugurated as the new President of the Scottish Grocers Federation. Brown, driving force behind the award-winning Pinkie Farm Store in Musselburgh, is the Federation's youngest ever President. He takes the reins as the convenience sector grapples with the ongoing challenges of an unprecedented public health crisis. In a unique sign of the times, the event took place during a virtual meeting of the SGF National Executive.

Brown takes over from the outgoing President Asim Sarwar, Managing Director of United Wholesale Scotland. Sarwar was at the helm during SGF's historic centenary year and has played a key role in guiding the Federation through the crucial early months of the pandemic. Brown's Presidency will focus on supporting retailers and maximising the opportunities provided by the new customer appetite for shopping locally.

Dan Brown said, "2020 has already presented us with circumstances that nobody could have



predicted, and industry retailers have fought through these challenging times with heroic strength and resilience. It is now more crucial than ever to maintain this united strength and with the growing influence and support that the SGF can provide, we hope to do everything we can to equip and support our fellow retailers through the next few years of challenge and uncertainty."

SGF CEO, Dr Pete Cheema OBE said, "We are in unprecedented times. No one could have predicted that Dan, who will be the youngest ever SGF President in our 102-year history, would take the reins of the Presidency as we struggle with the impact of a global pandemic. There are massive challenges ahead but there are also real opportunities, the likes of which we haven't seen before. Dan has the energy,

the drive, and the enthusiasm to help us shape the industry – and SGF – over the next two years to ensure we maximise these opportunities. The torch has been passed to a new generation – I look forward to working with him tremendously."

Brown will formally receive the chain of office at the next SGF annual conference, currently scheduled for March 2021.

## COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORTS SHOP WORKERS BILL

Scottish Grocers Federation enthusiastically welcomed the decision of the Scottish Parliament Economy Committee in June to recommend unanimously that MSPs should support the general principles of the Protection of Workers Bill. The Bill, brought forward by Edinburgh South MSP Daniel Johnson, will give shop staff additional legal protection when carrying out their work, particularly in relation to assault or abuse in relation to a mandatory activity such as requesting ID for age restricted products.

In 2016 at an SGF pre-election hustling events Mr Johnson, then a parliamentary candidate, had strongly signalled his support for this kind of legislation and he has fully delivered on this. SGF has been a committed supporter of the Bill throughout the parliamentary process. In



March this year SGF CEO Pete Cheema gave evidence directly to the Economy Committee on why it needed to support the Bill.

Dr Pete Cheema OBE said, "This is a positive result and it marks a step forward in securing a safer in-store environment for shop staff. Daniel has shown outstanding tenacity and commitment in taking this forward. However, we cannot allow complacency to derail this once in a generation opportunity: much work needs to be done in securing the support of MSPs when they vote on the Bill. With the help of our all members we know that this can be achieved."

At the time of writing it is anticipated that the Parliamentary Bureau will schedule a Stage 1 vote in the Chamber on 24th September 2020. SGF is actively lobbying the Scottish government, MSPs and key stakeholders to support this crucial Bill in the lead up to the vote.

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# SURGE OF NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS FOR SGF

The growth in popularity of the convenience sector over the COVID-19 pandemic has been reflected in a surge of new corporate members for Scottish Grocers Federation. One consequence of lockdown has been that customers have embraced shopping locally with the convenience channel capturing 30% of the total grocery market in recent months.

SGF's new members have come from across the service and manufacturing sectors of the supply chain and included: Calbee, Shoply, Highland Food and Drink Club, Lincoln Commercial Funding, Ian McLeod Distillers, William Grant and sons, StaffSafe, Cakes by Rebecca, GC Thermal Solutions, Too Good to Go and Motor Fuel Group.

SGF chief executive Dr Pete Cheema OBE commented, "We are delighted at this significant and rapid increase in membership. It is clear evidence that key companies in Scotland and across the UK fully realise the importance of having a strong connection with the convenience sector. The time is right –

shoppers have embraced convenience and by joining forces and working together we can ensure that they stay there. Our message is clear: come on board with us now!"

More information about SGF membership is available: [www.sgfcot.co.uk/about/become-a-member](http://www.sgfcot.co.uk/about/become-a-member).



## LOW PAY COMMISSION ORAL EVIDENCE SESSION

**The retail sector has seen the biggest impact of the National Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage, with almost 500,000 workers affected. Indeed, smaller firms are proportionately more affected by the NLW than larger firms. In Scotland 79% of staff in convenience stores are in the over-24-year-old age range – the age range impacted by the NLW.**

Scottish Grocers Federation (SGF) therefore welcomed the opportunity to have an oral evidence session with the Low Pay Commission (LPC) in August 2020. During the session, SGF chief executive Dr Pete Cheema OBE highlighted a range of issues such as constantly increasing staff costs as one of the biggest challenges the independent convenience store sector faced; retailing as a sector was undergoing massive change and the pressures on local and independent retailers were immense; rising cost pressures

from regulatory / legislative changes on retailers; ability to compete and respond to changing consumer trends was dependent on the ability to invest and make a living return for retailers; and, while responding positively to the Covid-19 national emergency, retailers have had to adapt and respond to the new public health and trading environments often at a cost to their business.

It was emphasised however

that LPC and UK Government needed to recognise the costs faced by retailers in relation to the NMW / NLW and retailer's limited scope for action needed to be understood, recognised and ameliorated. The point was made that significant above inflation increases in these rates each year were having a negative impact.

SGF will continue to make this case to government, parliament, and politicians.



# SCOTLAND LOVES LOCAL CAMPAIGN

SGF members were recently invited to take part in the launch of the “Scotland Loves Local” campaign in July which is a national initiative designed to encourage all those who live in Scotland to think local first and support their high streets safely and in line with public health guidelines. The ambition is for the campaign to run for a six-month period, until the end of 2020.

This is a behaviour change campaign – motivating people across Scotland to support their local businesses as part of the national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is co-ordinated by Scotland’s Towns Partnership and a range of other partners, including the Scottish Government. SGF past-President Abdul Majid has featured strongly in the wide-ranging publicity around the launch of the campaign.

The Scotland Loves Local Campaign has its own website (<https://lovelocal.scot/>) where people, businesses and entrepreneurs and other relevant stakeholders can access a campaign pack and branding toolkit to help spread the message that ‘Scotland Loves Local’. These materials include the key campaign messages and logos which people



can personalise to reflect their own locality. There is also a campaign video which people can view on the website. In highlighting the campaign people are encouraged to utilise social media to spread the word and to use it to share information about their business and the

products they offer. People are also asked to consider writing to local newspapers and politicians to seek their support as well as partnering with the campaign through sponsorship or other related opportunities.

In terms of on-going communications, the “Scotland Loves Local” campaign website is key source of information and we would encourage you to check it out on a regular basis. You can also get in touch with the campaign team at: <https://lovelocal.scot/contact-us/>.

The Scotland’s Towns Partnership also have a newsletter which provides updates and you can sign up for them at: [www.scotlandstowns.org/get-involved#contact-us](http://www.scotlandstowns.org/get-involved#contact-us). They also have twitter account which you can view at: <https://twitter.com/ScotlandsTowns>. SGF as a core campaign partner will also keep members updated on relevant news and related matters through its multi-communication channels.

## REVIEW OF SMALL BUSINESS BONUS DELAYED

The Scottish government announced in August a delay to the review of the Small Business Bonus Scheme (SBBS). The Fraser of Allander Institute – Scotland’s leading economic think tank – had been commissioned to conduct the review as part of a wider re-examination of the Non-Domestic Rates system. Earlier this year the Scottish government announced that, as part of a range of business support measures around the COVID-19 pandemic, retailers would pay no business rates at all in this financial year.

SGF head of public affairs Dr John Lee commented, “This is the right decision from the Scottish government. The impact of the current pandemic on

businesses must be taken into account and factored into the review process. Overall, the Small Business Bonus must be retained and there should be no moves towards making receipt of the bonus conditional or linked to initiatives such as the Scottish government Living Wage or modern apprenticeships. Retailers need to be able to count on the Small Business Bonus particularly as we move towards recovering from COVID-19.”

The SBBS review joins a growing list of key Scottish government policies which have been cancelled or ‘paused’ due to the impact of Coronavirus. It is now expected that the SBBS review will be completed in the spring of 2021.

# FACE COVERINGS IN STORES

Scottish Grocers Federation strongly criticised the announcement by the First Minister which saw the mandatory use of face coverings in shops – for customers and staff alike – introduced on 10th July 2020. Staff working behind protective screens were exempted.

Speaking at the time, SGF chief executive Dr Pete Cheema OBE commented, “We are extremely disappointed at this decision. Staff are already under tremendous pressure and this will only add to this in terms of enforcing these measures in-store and with age verification. Face coverings will further exacerbate retail crime. Convenience stores have already implemented social distancing measures very effectively and there is no evidence to show that stores are hotspots for COVID transmission. The Scottish government should have continued with a voluntary approach to face covering.”

SGF worked directly with the Scottish government to develop clear and comprehensive guidance on the new measures. The SGF website ([www.sgfscot.co.uk/](http://www.sgfscot.co.uk/)) contains links to relevant checklists for close contact retail services, a checklist for shops and access to posters which can be used in-store.

On 8th August 2020, the Scottish Government implemented amendments to the regulations around the use face coverings which expanded the settings



where they must be used. The regulations can be viewed at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2020/236/pdfs/ssi\\_20200236\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2020/236/pdfs/ssi_20200236_en.pdf).

It remains however a mandatory requirement to wear face coverings in convenience stores and in settings where goods are sold. The relevant exemptions to that obligation also remain in place. Retail workers can continue to wear face shields but must now also wear a face covering. The guidance for this available on the Scottish Government website ([www.gov.scot/publications/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/)).

# LOCAL SHOPS WELCOME ANNOUNCEMENT ON FOOD PROMOTIONS

During the summer, the Scottish government announced that it had postponed plans to bring forward legislation on restricting in-store promotions of foods deemed be high in fats, salt and sugar. It was likely that the Bill would also have placed restrictions on where products could be positioned within a store.

Taken together these measures would have had a significant impact on convenience retailers in Scotland. At the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, SGF wrote directly to the First Minister and key Cabinet Secretaries urging them not to bring forward any legislation which would adversely affect the convenience industry.

SGF executive Pete Cheema OBE said, “We are delighted that that the Scottish government has listened to our concerns and taken this very pragmatic approach to this legislation. These are unprecedented times. Our industry will need time and support to recover from the COVID-19

crisis and it would have been ill-advised to enact this legislation which would have been costly, disruptive and ineffective.”

The Bill has been postponed until at least September next year.





# Help for Members of The Scottish Grocers Federation

Convenience stores are a cornerstone of Scottish society and an essential service to millions; therefore, it is a great privilege for us to work with the Scottish Grocer's Federation and to offer our services to its members.

Over the last decade we have worked with numerous high street convenience stores, food & drink manufacturers and cold storage facilities so when we were approached by the SGF it was a natural progression for us to get on board. We are delighted to be in a position to assist members of the SGF remain profitable, efficient, and prosperous; especially through this immensely challenging time.

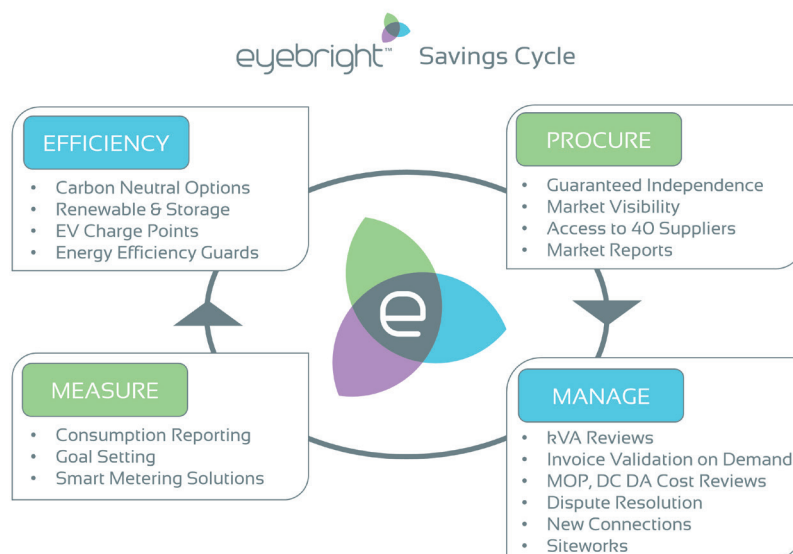
## ENERGY

We strive to bring sustainability and effective management strategy together, future proofing your business while reducing expenditure and environmental impact. The food and drink processing and storage industry is the fourth highest industrial energy user in the UK. The storage process, for both retailers and wholesalers, can be highly energy intensive and relies heavily on reliability and resilience. At Eyebright we strive to reduce energy consumption by implementing simple and effective efficiency measures, reducing carbon emissions and cutting costs. Through extensive supplier networks and continuous engagement with market indicators, Eyebright are able to implement highly effective procurement strategies for outfits of any size and structure. In addition to procurement and tariff reviews, we also look at service driven, non-procurement reliant aspects of energy management. We adopt a 'savings cycle' whereby we look at the complete solution, not just the price.

The energy used by refrigeration in convenience stores can be up to 70% of the overall bill and over 90% for cold storage businesses. As well as utilising the most efficient technologies possible, monitoring energy usage to accommodate for demand and reduce wastage is a necessity and something that eyebright have a custom platform for to support our clients with. For high consuming members, on-site generation reduces energy purchased from the grid and mitigates against third-party costs e.g. RO, DUoS, TNUoS. These charges are proportionate to energy consumption.

## WATER

In many food/drink processing activities, water is used in great volumes. We can take advantage of the deregulated market to ensure members are on the most competitive tariff and give advice on most effective supply solutions. eyebright provide a full bill validation service as well as trade effluent advice.



Reducing utility expenditure directly increases margins without the need to increase sales. It is therefore essential for members of SGF to seek advice from a reliable source. That is why we are here; to review and manage the utility expenditure of SGF members so they can focus on other areas of their business safe in the knowledge that they are in good hands. We would like to invite any member of SGF to approach us with anything utilities related and we would be happy to help. Please contact Callum Brooker on [07590627562](tel:07590627562) or email at [c.brooker@eyebrightutilities.co.uk](mailto:c.brooker@eyebrightutilities.co.uk).



# LAUNCH OF SGF RETAILER SUPPORT FUND

**The convenience sector has played a key role in supporting customers and communities throughout the COVID-19 crisis, but often this has come at a great cost. Working with our key partners, Scottish Grocers Federation wants to ensure convenience stores get the support they need.**

The SGF Retailer Support Fund has now been established to provide direct financial assistance to retailers and their families. The creation of the fund has been made possible by an initial – and very significant – contribution by key SGF partner Camelot. The Fund has now been given additional and very welcome contributions from key SGF members Shoply, Tunnocks and Towergate Insurance.

Camelot’s Retail Director, Jenny Blogg, commented: “We’re delighted to be able to make a donation to the SGF Retailer Support Fund. Our retail partners have always been there for us over the past 25 years, so we’re honoured to be in a position to help them out at this challenging time.

“I want to take this opportunity to thank SGF members for the continued support they have shown to Camelot, The National Lottery and the Good Causes it supports – particularly over the last few months. Good Cause funding has never been more crucial than it is now, as The National Lottery helps the UK respond to, and recover from, the COVID-19 crisis. In total, up to £600 million in National Lottery funding is being directed towards UK charities and organisations to help tackle the impact of COVID-19.”

SGF chief executive Dr Pete Cheema OBE said, “We are immensely grateful for the tremendous response from our key partners and members. They have shown how willing they are to support our industry during a time of unprecedented crisis. The fund will provide invaluable help to those in need.”

**For more information on the fund please download the application form on the SGF website [www.scottishshop.org.uk](http://www.scottishshop.org.uk)**

## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

**The SGF has grown from strength to strength over the last few years, and the leadership Asim Sarwar has provided during his tenure has made a significant contribution to this successful growth.**

Not only has Asim made history by leading us through an incredibly successful centenary year, but he has also played a vital role in the many recent accomplishments of the SGF and has guided us through the incredibly challenging times presented by COVID-19.

Understanding the importance of being proactive and engaging in his approach, Asim ensured our member’s voices were heard by government, parliament, and politicians on subjects such as Brexit, DRS and perhaps most notably the steps leading to and including the formal lodging of MSP Daniel Johnson’s Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) Bill.

This bill represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a safer environment for retailers, customers and communities, and thanks to the assistance of the SGF under Asim’s leadership, is now in its final stages of parliament.

Having listed just a handful of Asim’s accomplishments over the last two years, I think it is safe to say I have big boots to fill, however, it is truly an honour to be following in Asim’s footsteps as President and taking on the challenges of the years ahead.



2020 has already presented us with circumstances that nobody could have predicted, and as an industry, we have fought through these challenging times with heroic strength and resilience. Retailers became the glue that held our communities together, the fourth emergency service for those in need, and as an industry, retailers, wholesalers and suppliers came together to ensure essential goods and services were available for those who needed them the most.

These challenges have brought the wider industry closer than ever before, and as we draw into the latter stages of 2020 and prepare to take on 2021, the strength of this relationship becomes even more critical.

Taking a united approach, I hope to continue the momentum of Asim’s leadership in steering the SGF through the coming years. We will continue to ensure retailers have a voice in parliament, support all of our members through the transition to DRS, support Daniel Johnson’s Bill through the final stages of parliament, and ensure our industry is fully supported through whatever future challenges we may face.

*Dan*

# IS SCOTLAND FACING A LITTER EMERGENCY?



**Over the last fifteen years Keep Scotland Beautiful has tracked the accelerating decline of the key indicators of local environmental quality; the issues that matter to individuals, families and businesses – litter, dog fouling and vandalism.**

Although the challenging events of the last six months provided an opportunity for all of us to spend more time in our local area, appreciating the places we live, it has also meant many of us have noticed the litter and dog fouling that we might otherwise have passed by.

Recent polling we commissioned confirmed that during lockdown 29% of people believed that the amount of litter had got worse and 34% believe that the amount of dog fouling had got worse.

There has been a lockdown effect. We have all seen horrific images shared across the media of our iconic beauty spots trashed with abandoned campsites, tents, fires, litter, and human waste left for

others to clear.

But, as SGF members will be aware, this issue is not just impacting tourist hotspots, it is affecting town centres and communities across the country.

Litter is more than unsightly; it hurts our economy too, costing more than £1million a week to clear. Litter discourages much needed visitors and customers to our town centres. It can indirectly impact house prices and crime levels. And it can affect our health and wellbeing.

Good quality environments are good for business. Litter, graffiti and dog fouling incidents hurt us all.

Given the recorded national increase in litter, the lockdown effect, and associated pressures on councils and communities, Scotland faces the very real possibility of a litter emergency.

We know that tackling littering behaviours is complex. We know every community has a unique set of challenges to tackle. But we also know, through our work across Scotland that every community can make an impact – sweeping up at the shop front, planting flowers to make the place looked loved, carrying out litter picks and amplifying national campaign messages at a local level.

As COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease we all have an opportunity to get out and do something about lockdown litter.

We believe strongly that SGF and its members have an important part to play in this effort. If you'd like to join us as we work to support communities to tackle litter in the places you love, please get in touch to find out how we can help.

**For further information contact Paul Wallace at [cleanup@keepsotlandbeautiful.org](mailto:cleanup@keepsotlandbeautiful.org) or visit [www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org](http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org)**

